



Sandy and Stephen Nicholas were another two guests at the preview of *Australian Visions*.



Sydney Myer with his father, Bailleau, at the art preview ... wedding jitters weren't the worry.



Margaret Wu ... back with more culinary skills.

Giving for the gift of art

If you ever find yourself getting bored when you're with the art crowd you can amuse yourself for ages by announcing innocently you'd once heard an expert say that Australia has never produced a single piece of great art. But you have to pick your moment.

That moment was definitely not the cocktail party I went to the other evening when some of our best young artistic talent was paraded.

My word, they had some art-loving social heavies on parade.

And even more of my word, they meant business. Like half a million dollars worth of business.

That's how much a group of our more public spirited types intend raising to ensure the setting up of an Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, with the laudable aim of encouraging our brighter art talent.

"A centre of this kind is urgently necessary because lots of our good young artists can't get their work into the major art

beautifully situated in Dallas Brooks Drive in the Domain in South Yarra. All they need now is the half million to create the perfect set-up.

So people like Henry Gillespie, Sidney Myer, Sir Sydney Nolan, Mrs Victor Smorgon, Mrs William Stewart, Mrs Fred Williams and Mrs Kenneth Wu have been rustling around for a group of founding donors to get things going.

YOUR entree is a mere \$1000, which if you like art is a small investment indeed.

And if you don't like art but you do like social climbing it is a very small investment indeed, because at that you are rubbing shoulders with 50 highly collectable names like the Murdochs, the Morgans, the Besens, Bardases, Fairfaxes, Smorgons and such.

How good is this talent that is having such a hard time cracking it for wall space?

Very good indeed. The cocktail party was having first look at a showing called *Australian Visions* that won international acclaim when it went on display at New York's famed Guggenheim Museum last year.

We live in a cock-eyed world.

Perth, Sydney and Brisbane.

Henry Gillespie tells me they've started their fund-raising by approaching private donors and will now lobby the corporate sector. He's hoping, too, that the Victorian Government will prove to be a substantial donor.

Chit-chat from the party:

I saw young Sydney Myer looking rather less than his usual relaxed self and inquired whether he was getting butterflies as his wedding day gets nearer (he's marrying the vivacious Fiona Malley).

"No, no," said Sydney. "Not about the wedding."

Never occurred to me to ask what else he could possibly have butterflies about. Otherwise I'd have been out trying to beat Coles to some of those Myer shares, wouldn't I?

PRUE Acton was a picture looking at pictures. A more than capable artist herself, she's delighted that younger daughter Atalanta "looks like taking up art" when she finishes school at Preshil.

Recently-wed Sandra Masel and legal-eagle husband Leigh were putting the party champagne to dual use, celebrating